DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 477 139 SO 034 547

AUTHOR	Gregory, Ross
TITLE	Cold War America, 1946 to 1990. Almanacs of American Life.
ISBN	ISBN-0-8160-3868-6
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	669p.; General Editor: Richard Balkin.
AVAILABLE FROM	Facts on File, Inc., 132 West 31st Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10001 ($105). Tel: 800-322-8755, ext. 228 (Toll Free); Fax: 800-678-3633 (Toll Free); e-mail: CustServ@factsonfile.com; Web site: http://factsonfile.com/.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reference Materials - General (130)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available From EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Cultural Context; Data; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *International Relations; *Social Change; Social History; Social Studies; *Technological Advancement; Thematic Approach; *United States History; World Problems
IDENTIFIERS	*Cold War; Technological Change; *USSR

ABSTRACT

This book offers an in-depth look at U.S. culture during a 45-year period when the threat of nuclear war loomed over millions worldwide, and post-World War II ideological tensions took form as an ever-deepening chasm separating two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. The book finds that the national and global societies that emerged at the end of this period were nearly unrecognizable from those that existed at its outset. It examines aspects of U.S. life during the Cold War years by exploring themes and subthemes such as expansion, diversification, and transformation. The expanse of U.S. influence in the post-World War II period was striking, as were the growth of the economy and the pace and extent of technological innovation. The U.S. population and culture, diverse at the start of the period, underwent a continuous evolution that affected all aspects of society and resulted in a far more politically inclusive and socially responsive culture than had existed previously. The societal transformation that took shape in response to cold war political and military tensions and according to the wishes, needs, and aspirations of an ever-changing U.S. populace was unique. Through extensive statistical tables, charts, maps, photographs, and illustrations, the book reveals diverse aspects of everyday life in the United States during the Cold War from changing patterns in the racial and ethnic diversity of new immigrants to changing choices in birth control to the growth in the number of colleges and universities and the number of students able to attend them. Contains an extensive selected bibliography. Appended is a list of tables. (BT)

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